

Claims

[c1] What is claimed is:

1. An automated method of remotely activating options resident on a plurality of devices comprising the steps of:

generating a number of activation keys, each of which is specific to one of a plurality of in-field devices having inactive options resident in a memory of each of the plurality of in-field devices;

sending each representative activation key and a verification script to each of the in-field devices;

receiving a report from each of the verification scripts; and

evaluating each report independently, whereby if the report is satisfactory for a corresponding in-field device, the respective activation key is installed in the corresponding in-field device to activate an option and if the report is not satisfactory for a corresponding in-field device, aborting activation of the option for the corresponding in-field device.

[c2] 2. The automated method of claim 1 further comprising the step of receiving a host ID from each of the plurality

of in-field devices.

[c3] 3. The automated method of claim 2 further comprising the step of generating each activation key to be unique to each of the plurality of in-field devices based on the host ID from each of the plurality of in-field devices.

[c4] 4. The automated method of claim 1 further comprising the step of bundling each individual activation key with the verification script and wherein the step of sending the activation key and the verification script to the in-field device includes sending the bundle.

[c5] 5. The automated method of claim 1 wherein the step of aborting further includes the step of sending a message prompting user contact with a centralized facility and identifying the in-field device in which activation of the option was aborted.

[c6] 6. The automated method of claim 1 further comprising the step of generating the activation key upon receiving an access request.

[c7] 7. The automated method of claim 6 further comprising the step of receiving an account ID as part of the access request wherein the account ID is a unique identifier of a site initiating the access request.

- [c8] 8. The automated method of claim 7 further comprising the step of receiving a billing ID as part of the account ID.
- [c9] 9. The automated method of claim 7 further comprising the step of validating the access request and account ID.
- [c10] 10. The automated method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of in-field devices includes medical imaging devices.
- [c11] 11. The automated method of claim 10 wherein the plurality of in-field devices includes diagnostic equipment of different modalities.
- [c12] 12. A system to respond to a request to remotely enable options resident in the memory of a plurality of in-field devices, the system comprising:
a centralized facility located remotely from a plurality of in-field devices having inactive options, and the centralized facility having at least one computer programmed to:
select verification scripts to check that each of the plurality of in-field devices is in condition to activate an inactive option;
select activation keys unique to each of the plurality of in-field devices;

send at least one verification script and at least one activation key to each of the plurality of in-field devices, wherein each of the in-field devices is capable of executing the verification script; and independently abort activation of an inactive option if a report indicates that one of the plurality of in-field devices is not in a condition to activate the inactive option.

[c13] 13. The system of claim 12 wherein the computer is further programmed to determine whether each of the plurality of in-field devices is in condition to activate the inactive options independently and install the activation keys in each of the in-field devices independently.

[c14] 14. The system of claim 12 wherein the computer is further programmed to generate the activation keys upon receipt of an access request.

[c15] 15. The system of claim 14 wherein the activation keys are based upon each unique host ID received from each of the plurality of in-field devices.

[c16] 16. The system of claim 15 wherein the computer is further programmed to electronically transmit the verification scripts and activation keys to the plurality of in-field devices to activate the inactive options simultaneously.

[c17] 17. The system of claim 12 wherein the computer is fur-

ther programmed to determine whether each of the plurality of in-field devices is in condition to activate the inactive option individually from a single report automatically generated by the verification scripts.

[c18] 18. The system of claim 17 wherein an individual in-field device is in condition to activate the inactive option if the individual in-field device supports the inactive option and dependent configuration is unnecessary to activate the inactive option.

[c19] 19. The system of claim 12 wherein the computer is further programmed to send a notification to contact the centralized facility if any of the plurality of in-field devices is not in condition to activate the inactive options.

[c20] 20. The system of claim 12 wherein the plurality of in-field devices is medical imaging devices.

[c21] 21. A system to remotely enable options through a network of in-field devices, the system comprising:
a network of in-field devices located remotely from a centralized facility and programmed to:
(A) send a single access request to the centralized facility to request activation of options of the in-field devices;
(B) receive activation keys uniquely configured to activate the options of the in-field devices and verification scripts

to authenticate a current status of each of the in-field devices;

(C) send a report generated by the verification scripts to the centralized facility indicating the current status of the in-field devices;

(D) install one activation key in one of the in-field devices to activate the options in the one in-field device if the current status of the one in-field device is determined to be satisfactory by the centralized facility; and

(E) repeat steps (C) and (D) for all of the in-field devices of the network.

[c22] 22. The system of claim 21 wherein the current status of one in-field device is determined to be unsatisfactory if, regarding the one in-field device, the reports indicate at least one of: the option is currently active, the in-field device does not support the option, and absent dependencies preclude activation of the option.

[c23] 23. The system of claim 21 wherein the activation keys and the verification scripts are received as a bundle.

[c24] 24. The system of claim 23 wherein the bundle is compressed.

[c25] 25. The system of claim 21 wherein the in-field devices are networked medical imaging devices.

